

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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## News Release



Jeff Harris, contractor for the Creef Cut Boardwalk, stands in the foreground of the final phase of construction. Jeff passed away just weeks after completing the project.

Photo Credit: George Gentry



Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce coordinated a ribbon-cutting to announce the new boardwalk.

Front row are pictured: (left to right) Ann Coughlin, NC State Trails Program; Refuge Manager Mike Bryant; and Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society President George "Bucket" Taylor. Visitors are encouraged to visit Creef Cut Wildlife Trail at the intersection of Milltail Road and US 64 in East Lake.

Photo Credit: George Gentry

### **Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Announces New Boardwalk on Creef Cut Wildlife Trail**

Visitors to Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge now have easy viewing access to a beautiful freshwater marsh adjacent to Creef Cut Wildlife Trail, thanks to a recent partnership. The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society received a grant from the National Recreational Trails Program and built over 580 feet of universally-accessible boardwalk off the existing trail. Partners in the project included the National Trails Program, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society and the late Carl Jeffrey Harris of Engelhard. The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce coordinated a ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 8 to announce the opening of the new boardwalk.

Speaking at the ribbon-cutting, Refuge Manager Mike Bryant described the project, "This is the perfect project to explain the real value of partnering. The US Fish and Wildlife Service had only \$5,000 for this project. The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society offered \$12,000. Yet, that money and volunteer hours were the 'loaves and fishes'. Using Society money as matching funds and the refuge money for contingency needs, we were able to qualify for a \$32,250 grant through the National Recreational Trails program. Accomplished through normal government methods, it's no telling how much this trail would have cost. With partners and volunteers, the entire project cost less

than \$50,000."

Bryant added, "Probably the key element that made this project possible was the Society's ability to contract with Jeff Harris to build the boardwalk. Jeff's bid was more than reasonable, and he went above and beyond his contractual responsibilities. Without him, this project would not have happened. Jeff passed away shortly after the boardwalk was completed. For many of us, this boardwalk will serve as a constant memorial to Jeff Harris."